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## REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018

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**SUBJECT**     Aichi Target for Parks and Protected Areas

**ISSUE**

Collaborative action toward a terrestrial network of protected and conserved areas throughout Canada and regional government contributions towards the national objectives.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 150 Heads of State came together to recognize the loss of biodiversity as a significant threat to the world. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was created to stop biodiversity loss. It set three goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

Progress toward stopping the loss of biodiversity has been slow and ineffective.

The 195 member states of the CBD agreed in 2010 to 20 biodiversity targets, known as the Aichi Targets, to be achieved by 2020, in order to reverse the decline of biodiversity. Aichi Target 11 focuses on the conservation of biological diversity through parks, protected areas and other measures:

*By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.*

Parties were urged to develop their own national targets using Aichi targets as a guide. In 2015, Canada adopted the “2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada”, a set of 19 targets covering issues ranging from species at risk to sustainable forestry to connecting Canadians to nature. Specifically related to parks and protected areas, Canada’s Pathway to Target 1 promises that:

*By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.*

In February 2017, federal, territorial and provincial Ministers responsible for parks, protected areas and biodiversity conservation identified the goal of the initiative as:

*In partnership with Indigenous Peoples and relevant sectors of Canadian society, produce a pathway, grounded in science and traditional knowledge, to establish a coordinated and connected network of parks and conservation areas throughout Canada that will serve as the foundation for biodiversity conservation for generations to come.*

To achieve the goal, a National Advisory Panel (NAP) was established by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada to provide recommendations to the government on how to achieve 17% terrestrial and 10% marine protection in Canada by 2020. Members of the NAP represent a broad spectrum of perspectives, including: Indigenous organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council), land trusts, conservation non-governmental organizations, industry, academia and youth. Membership and biographies of the NAP can be found at: <http://conservation2020canada.ca/who-we-are/>.

Respecting Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, an Indigenous Circle of Experts was created to ensure Indigenous knowledge was included in the process. Importantly, the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) will produce a publicly-accessible report with information and recommendations on how Indigenous Conservation Areas can contribute toward achieving the goals of Canada Target 1 in the spirit and practice of reconciliation. Membership and biographies of ICE can be found at: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/who-we-are/#ICE>.

Notable to municipal parks organizations was the absence of the local government voice in the process. Through efforts by municipal and regional parks staff from across Canada, senior governments created a Local Government Engagement Task Team (LGETT) and following, to support the Task Team's responsibilities, a Local Government Advisory Group.

The LGETT includes representatives from the Regional District of Central Okanagan, BC Ministry of Environment, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and Alberta Parks.

The Local Government Advisory Group includes Capital Regional District (CRD) staff and representatives from ten other municipal jurisdictions across Canada.

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Local government's role in sharing information and responding to public opinion about the importance and significance of nature conservation will enrich Pan-Canadian efforts to stop biodiversity loss and improve human health and well-being. The CRD's park system and land acquisition program are elements of a new approach in Canada that recognizes local government roles in achieving the establishment, management and connection of parks across a landscape and in public understanding and support for nature conservation. Connecting local residents in Canada's most populated areas to the natural environment through local, regional and near urban parks achieves greater awareness of the fundamental role nature plays to humans and to the conservation of important habitat for non-human species.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The establishment of parks and protected areas are a preferred choice by governments at all levels from around the world to address biodiversity loss. Creating an interconnected network of parks and protected areas across Canada, through the establishment and management of local and near urban parks and protected areas, responds to the need for non-human species to have conserved habitat suitable for their life needs. In turn, the ecological systems and process that support clean air, clean land and clean water are guarded from harm. Together, ecological and social systems interact to increase their ability to respond to sudden changes. This characteristic of resiliency is critical to continued health and well-being of all species in Canada, including humans.

### **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

Local governments across Canada can expect increased interest from provincial/territorial, federal and Indigenous governments to partner in strategies to address biodiversity loss through the establishment of interconnected parks and protected areas.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be increased involvement of Indigenous and local governments in discussions and planning to help achieve Canada's Pathway to Target 1. The Local Government Advisory Group marks a significant shift in how senior levels of government are recognizing the role local governments play in the establishment and protection of lands and waters for conservation, parks and protected area purposes.

### **CONCLUSION**

Canada's Pathway to Target 1 calls for the protection of 17% of Canada's terrestrial environment and 10% of Canada oceans by 2020. Parks are cost efficient and effective ways to reduce biodiversity loss and increase human health and well-being. Staff will continue to work with other governments to ensure that the important role that local governments play in protecting and conserving lands and waters in Canada is recognized.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Regional Parks Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this staff report on the Aichi Target for Parks and Protected Areas be received for information.

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